(a) whether it is a fact that a good number of vacant posts in Group D In the reserved categories of SCs, STs and OBCs have been lying vacant in various banks i.e. State Bank of Patiala, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Canara Bank and Bank of Baroda in their Delhi/New Delhi offices since long; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government concerned authorities to fill up the said reserved vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) As per reports received from the banks mentioned in part (a) of the Question, the position of backlog are as follows :-

	Backlog in the Category of		
	SCs	STs	OBCs
State Bank of Patiala	3	4	5
Oriental Bank of Commerce	2	–	9
Canara Bank	2	4	20
Bank of Baroda	–	–	3

Necessary action for filling up the backlog vacancies in these categories have already been initiated by Oriental Bank of Commerce and State Bank of Patiala. The other two banks have reported that they are also taking necessary action for filling up these vacancies during the current year.

[Translation]

Fund for Construction of Chambers in Supreme Court

1572. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any scheme for welfare of advocates and betterment of the legal profession;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the amount earmarked therefor during the current financial year;

(c) whether the amount earmarked for the purpose is being utilised for construction of addltional chambers for the advocates in Supreme Court;

(d) If so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MiNISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Cases against Additional Session Judges

1573. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of on going cases in Tis Hazari Court in which Additional Session Judges are them-selves involved;

(b) if so, whether the Government expect a Sub-Ordinate Civil Judge to give verdict against his superior in the interest of justice when the ADJ's are working in the same court; and

(c) if not, the step taken by the Government to ensure justice in such cases ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Commercialisation of Ganga Water

1574. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Ganga water is being commercialised and a number of companies are engaged in filling up the bottles with Ganga water for sale and export;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Government is aware of sale of Ganga water in the traditional form. Bottling and export through commercial companies has been reported in the press. Under the current Export Import Policy, there are no restrictions on export of mineral waters and aerated waters (ITC HS Code : 22011000) and other water (including natural waters - ITC HS code : 22019009.

[English]

Import of Virgin Polymers

1575. SHRI BALAI CHANDRA RAY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that virgin polymers are imported under the declaration of scrap or recycled plastics at Kandla port; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) No import of virgin polymers declared as scrap or recycled plastics at Kandla port has been notlced.

Jute Corporation of India

1576. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have fixed support price of raw jute for the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) The action plan prepared by JCI procure jute during the above period ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) and (b) Pursuant to the decision of the Central Govt. to fix the minimum support price for TD-5 grade of raw jute grown in Assam at Rs. 570/- qtl. for the 1997-98 jute session i.e. July/June, the corresponding minimum support prices for all grades of jute for various up-country markets in different jute growing States have been fixed by the Jute Commissioner in the light of normal market price differentials.

(c) The Government have released requisite funds of JCI to the undertake price support operations. JCI have prepared action plan to enter the market to arrest the falling prices of raw jute effectively.

Appointment of Disabled on the Board of Directors

1577. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the details of the steps taken to get disabled persons nominated to the Board of Directors of Nationalised banks and private sector banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : Nomination of directors on the Boards of nationalised banks and other scheduled commercial banks are made in accordnace with the provisions of the relevant statutes governing such nominations. These statutes do not specifically provide for appointment of disabled persons on these Boards.

[Translation]

Directions to Commercial Banks to provide more Loan to Agricultural Sector

1578. DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA :

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :

SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have directed the Commercial banks to provide more loans to the farmers for encouraging the modernisation of Agricultural sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of farmers benefited/likely to be benefited as a result of the said directions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) As per extant instructions issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), all scheduled commercial banks are required to provide 18% of their net bank credit to the agriculture sector. As of March 1997, on a provisional basis, the total advances to the agriculture sector from all public sector commercial banks aggregated Rs. 31,012 crores (16.35% of Net Bank Credit against stipulated 18%), which shows an increase of about 17.7% over the level of Rs. 26,351 crores for the year 1995-96. Further, under the Special Agriculture Credit Plans (SACPs) RBI has advised scheduled banks to keep up a growth rate of 25% over the disbursals made in the previous year and has fixed target for SACP for the current year at 16,097 crores as against estimated achievement of Rs. 10,172 crores during the year 1995-96. Further, National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) has also advised the co-operatives and Regional Rural Banks for attaining required growth in the flow of ground level agricultural credit.

Some of the important steps taken to strengthen the institutional arrangement for augmenting flow of credit to agriculture include, inter-alia, augmentation of NABARD's share capital to Rs. 2000 crore over the next five years, setting up of Rural Insfrastructural projects, allocation of an amount of Rs. 270 crore during the current year for restructuring of RRBs, establishment of State Level Agriculture Development Finance Companies (SLADFCs) to promote investments in commercial and high-tech farming and establishment of local area banks.

(c) At this stage, it will be difficult to estimate precisely the number of farmers benefited likely to be benefited as a result of the proposed measures.

[English]

Study on Soft Drink by BICP

1579. SHRI PRATAP SINGH SAINI : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have commissioned a Bureau of Industrial Cost and Prices Study on the soft drink industry during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith terms of reference;

(c) whether a report has been submitted by the BICP;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith its findings;

(e) the names of each bottler from whom information was sought by BICP; and

(f) the details of information sought and the information provided by these bottlers ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (f) Does not arise.

Lok Adalat in Rural Areas

1580. DR. A.K. PATEL : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :